

Joan Baez *Farewell Angelina* (Vanguard Records)
by Peter Stone Brown
10 Stars

In the fall of 1965, Joan Baez released her sixth album *Farewell Angelina*, an album that signaled a change and a departure in the subtlest of ways towards more contemporary songs without discarding the folk songs and ballads that made her reputation. While Baez had included Bob Dylan songs on her two previous albums, *In Concert Part 2* and *5*, including changing the former after it was released to include "With God On Our Side," *Farewell Angelina* included four Bob Dylan. In addition, while previous Baez albums included occasional accompaniment by other musicians, this album featured string bass on every track, and electric guitar (actually a Martin acoustic with a pickup) by Bruce Langhorne on several songs.

The title track, a previously unknown song by Bob Dylan was the album's highlight though the album was strong throughout. The melody was based on the traditional "Wagoner's Lad," the song that opened Baez' second album, but was also the melody of the cowboy song, "I Ride An Old Paint." The lyrics however were among the most poetic and surreal that Dylan had yet delivered with startling images, a table standing empty by the edge of the sea, cross-eyed pirates shooting tin cans with a sawed-off shotgun and the make-up man's hands shutting the eyes of the dead not to embarrass anyone. Each verse ended with a farewell and a vision of the sky, at times embarrassed, trembling, on fire and erupting.

The second song was one Baez had been singing onstage as a duet with Dylan for the previous year, "Daddy, You Been On My Mind." Interestingly enough, Judy Collins had also at pretty much the same time released a version of the song on her fifth album. Track 3 was "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue." (At the time of release, few knew that Baez had broken off her relationship with Dylan who would marry not long after the album's release. The details of that relationship wouldn't be revealed until the following decade.)

Track four was a beautiful version of the Irish "Wild Mountain Thyme," made famous by the McPeake Family. Decades later a version of the song would emerge in footage cut from the film *Dont Look Back* sung informally with Dylan in a hotel room in England. This was followed by a strong version of a Woody Guthrie ballad "Ranger's Command" that few people knew of at the time. Side One concluded with Donovan's "Colours" with beautiful guitar from Langhorne.

Side Two began with the country song, "A Satisfied Mind," a hit for Porter Wagoner and then moved into familiar Baez territory, the traditional

American ballad, "The River In The Pines." Always a better guitar player than she's given credit for, the track is simply haunting. There are then two foreign songs, one in French and "Where Have All The Flowers Gone" sung in German. Both are okay, but are the weakest songs on the album. The album concludes with a powerful "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall," accompanied by Langhorne.

Farewell Angelina was the last of Baez' for lack of a better word folk albums. It remains one of her best.